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The Enquirer

Examined and Instructed.

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THE ENQUIRER

EXAMINED AND INSTRUCTED.

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Who are the parties concerned during the dialogue?

What does the author mean by examining an Enquirer? If the party asking the questions is the "Enquirer" the other, who answers, in no instance examines, but simply replies.

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PART FIRST.

THE ENQUIRER EXAMINED.

Question 1. What evidence have we that man is under law to God?

Answer. The obligation of man was solemnly announced from the summit of Sinai, Responsibility. amidst thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake, in that grand, primary utterance—"*I am the Lord thy God.*"

Q. 2. Where lie the foundations of responsibility?

A. In the character and relations of God and the structure and dependence of man.

Q. 3. What does God require of a rational creature?

A. Two things—sanctity of nature and rectitude of life. "All thy heart—and all thy strength."

as a Pastor or S.S. Teacher would—though the questions are not at all such as an Enquirer wd ask

Question 1. Have you rendered to your Maker the sanctity and rectitude he demands?

A. Far from it. From my birth I have
Rebellion. sinned against him.

Q. 2. Where do you find sin?

A. Everywhere. In all my nature, and in all my conduct. "Every imagination of
Ruin. the thoughts of (my) heart is only evil continually." *Gen.* vi. 5.

Question 1. How do you feel in view of your ill-treatment of God?

A. I am sorry that I have sinned against
Awakening. him.

Q. 2. Why are you sorry for your sins?

A. My first regret was this: that sin
Spurious Conviction. distressed my soul, and would destroy it.

Q. 3. This sorrow for sin so exclusively *selfish*, can it ever reach the favor of God, or save the soul of the sinner?

A. Never. Because—the penitent having no sympathy with God, can neither possess the affections, discharge the duties, nor enjoy the blessings of a child: because—proffering no restitution for past offences, he can never escape the remorse of enlightened conscience, nor the retribution of righteous law: and because—without the very first thought of restoring to God that rightful dominion over his soul disputed from the beginning, he now ventures to call for divine sympathy and cooperation in his rebellious course—a procedure as profoundly stupid as it is wicked.

+ Then he is not a "penitent"

Question 1. Do you now perceive that sin has other vicious bearings besides damage to yourself?

A. I do. I feel that my transgressions are especially injurious and dishonoring to *God.*

Genuine Conviction.

Q. 2. Wherein does sin wrong God?

A. In his majesty, authority, excellence, affection, benefactions, counsel and patience —by withholding that which is due to him for the same.

Q. 3. How does man ascertain his sin?

Author of Conviction. *A.* The Holy Ghost convinces of sin; and is most freely offered to the suppliant. *Lu.* xi. 13.

Q. 4. In what way does the Spirit convince of sin?

Means of Conviction. *A.* Through the truth.

Question 1. What, then, is your duty, if you would learn your sin?

Sinner's Duty. *A.* In the use of appointed means, I must press upon my conscience all God's commands, and my violation of them; and beseech the accompanying conviction of the Spirit.

Q. 2. What words of the Scriptures enjoin this duty?

A. "Thus saith the Lord—consider"—"meditate" — "think" — "examine" — "search"—"ponder"—"desire"—"lay to heart"—"follow after," &c.

Q. 3. Will any degree of consideration and prayer, however profound and proper, convert, or even convince the soul without the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost?

A. No, indeed! "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Question 1. When, therefore, the sinner, profoundly discouraged, realizes that one use of means is to teach their uselessness—what is he to do?

A. Cherishing a sincere trust in God's veracity, let him look through means to the power that lies beyond and supplicate that pledged agency of the Holy Ghost which works the new birth in the heart of man. By the light of God's law, undiscouraged, let him laboriously carry out the most searching self-inspection, inward and outward; and by the force of God's

Sinner's Dependence.

promise, let him heartily and hopefully struggle on until he reaches that help for the seeker which "God has laid upon one who is able to save unto the uttermost."

Question 1. What is Regeneration? and what Conversion?

A. Regeneration and conversion are terms frequently employed in Scripture to express the same work of the Spirit: in stricter speech they stand for different acts of the same or of different agents.

Regeneration and Conversion.

Regeneration is that act of the Holy Ghost, whereby the degenerate nature of man is "renewed in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him who created him." Conversion is that work of the Spirit, or act of man under his influence, whereby he returns from sin to holiness, thus exhibiting his new nature by newness of life.

Q. 2. How does this progressive work of the Spirit in awakening, conviction, regeneration and conversion, tend to save the soul?

A. By putting it out of sympathy with sin by repentance, and into sympathy with God by holiness.

Question 1. What is justification?

A. Justification is that judicial act whereby God ministers the rewards of the law to the faithful subject of his throne.

Justification.

When applied to fallen men, *justification*, *acceptance*, or *pardon* is that divine procedure which treats the sinner as if he were just—but mark! only on the ground of the meritorious righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 2. How many things are implied in justification?

A. Three. A sinner, a pardoner. and a ground of pardon.

Q. 3. What do you mean by the ground of pardon?

A. *That* on account of which God pardons; *that* in consideration of which God

forgives; *that* which justifies God in justifying the ungodly. The ground of pardon is that which opens the way to forgiveness——that principle or foundation upon which God builds his clemency to the sinner.

Ground of Pardon.

Q. 4. What are the requisites of a legitimate ground of pardon?

A. They are two, viz.: conformity to law—for you cannot justify sinfulness; and honor to the law-giver—for obedience is the practical acknowledgment of the subject that the law-giver hath dealt equitably with him.

Q. 5. Can man, in and of himself, ever provide a legitimate ground of pardon?

A. Never. Because first—man can never present conformity to law; for being a sinner, he can never meet the claims of a perfect moral standard. Were God, without explanation, to justify a sinner, he would condemn his law for demanding sinless rectitude. Again—because man can never bring

forward due honor to the law-giver; for, being a sinner, he practically declares that God was unjustifiable in promulgating such a law. Thus the sinner is irrecoverably lost. Left to himself, he never could imagine a way in which God could forgive him without sacrificing both his character and his law.

Question 1. In our blessed Chistianity, what, in fact, is the ground of pardon?

A. Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is the alone foundation of forgiveness. He Christ the Ground. is "the Lord our Righteousness." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ the Lord."

Q. 2. How is it that Christ crucified, the surety, constitutes such an all-perfect and glorious ground of pardon?

A. Because first, by his active obedience in man's stead, Christ provides most glorious conformity to the broken law; even the perfect righteousness of an independent

being, infinitely more exalted than those whom he graciously represents: secondly—because he secures thereby stupendous honor to the lawgiver; since the combined obedience and sufferings of Christ practically endorse the rectitude of God's law and character by a body of intelligence and conscience infinitely superior to the combined intellectual and moral sagacity of the whole human family.

Question 1. By the Gospel plan, how does man avail himself of Christ—"the foundation," Christ—"our Righteousness?"

Means of Pardon.

A. By faith. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It is written that faith is "reckoned," "counted," "accounted," and "imputed"—"for righteousness."

Q. 2. What is saving faith?

A. Saving faith includes two things. It implies that the sinner has been actually

brought to see and to feel that, in and of himself, he does not possess and can never provide a foundation for pardon, *i. e.* either conformity to law or honor to the sovereign: then—saving faith is that filial confidence which gratefully accepts, and humbly pleads the vicarious obedience and death of Christ as his alone and most glorious basis of forgiveness before God.

Question 1. Is there not great danger, in practice, of mistaking the gospel ground of pardon or object of faith?

A. Scarcely one peril in all human life so great. While history cannot present the solitary child of Adam—seeking salvation—
Common Error.
who mistook the first constituent of justification, viz., that he himself was the candidate for pardon; nor yet the second, viz., that God was the dispenser of pardon; all history might well nigh be challenged to present that solitary human being who did not, at first, mistake the third point, viz. the ground of pardon. The fact is, most

Is one's being "a candidate for justification" a "Constituent of Justification?"

naturally, almost irresistibly under the influence of all human sentiments, promptings and practice, the anxious sinner, at first, in the spirit of his mind will be sure to hold up to God his own sorrow for sin and purpose of amendment, as the *power*, the *argument* which is to persuade God to pardon him. Let the inquirer carefully examine the workings of his heart, and he will be sure to discover that he is not trying to influence God by Christ's work of atonement, but by his own work of reformation.

Question 1. What then shall the forlorn sinner do to be saved?

Saving Duty.

A. With all his heart, let him look right up into the very face of God, and feel and say—"Oh my Heavenly Father! Graciously help me by thy Holy Spirit, and I will ever struggle to cherish the profoundest *godly* sorrow for my sins—but I do not ask thee to pardon me on the ground of this repentance: graciously assist me by the Holy Spirit, and I will ever struggle to obey

thee through all future life—but I do not ask thee to forgive me on the score of this obedience. A lost man, utterly destitute of all power to provide the very slightest foundation of forgiveness, I do most gratefully accept the *offered righteousness of the Son of God*, and humbly solicit the pardon of my sins on the ground of His atonement, and on this ground alone." Do this, and you shall assuredly be saved; for Jesus Christ is exalted expressly to give "repentance unto Israel, and remission of sin."

Q. 2. How does justification save the sinner?

A. By delivering him from his condemnatory sentence of the law, and restoring him to the position of the faithful.

Question 1. What is Adoption?

A. Adoption is that most gracious act of God's parental affection which bestows all the blessings of sonship upon those only who truly weep for sin, and believe in Jesus.

Adoption.

Q. 2. How does adoption tend to save?

A. Adoption contributes to salvation by imparting all filial properties to the returning soul, and bestowing all parental benediction upon him.

Question 1. What is the process whereby fallen man reaches all the salvation accessible to him in this life?

A. By the light of Scripture, teach him his responsibility, rebellion, ruin, and redemption; and by the grace of the Holy Spirit bring him to experience, awakening, conviction, regeneration, justification and adoption—these and the modifications they involve constitute the elements of all the salvation he will ever enjoy either in this world or in that which is to come.

Has not the attempt already been made to instruct the enquirer?

PART SECOND.

THE ENQUIRER INSTRUCTED.

PERMIT me to arrange the prominent points discussed touching God and man in such combinations as may, by God's blessing, more perfectly light your way to the Lord Jesus Christ, and qualify you for his more wise and vigorous service through future life.

Natural Obstacles.

I. Study the four grand obstacles which every human being must encounter, and God must remove, before fallen man ever reaches the great salvation of the gospel.

1. *Love of fallen self, or unwillingness to renounce the world.* Examine your heart closely by the light of revelation, and, with divine assistance, you will assuredly find that, so long as you retain your native

worldly mind, you cannot—by the essential opposition of flesh and spirit—you cannot receive, for you do positively reject, both regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and justification by the blood of Jesus. Bear in mind, God alone, through simple, filial faith, can remove this deadly hindrance to salvation. Wherefore studiously balance the weight of eternal life against the vanity of the world—but beware that you rely not upon the work of your intellect or the power of your will. These can never unlock the native grasp of a fallen heart upon vanity. No, never! never! If you would be saved, while your eye is fixed upon the utter emptiness of all time-good, and the incomprehensible solidity of gospel blessings, see to it that you look right up to God, most *humbly* complaining—"O my God! my soul cleaveth to the earth;" and most *trustfully* expecting the promise—"From all your idols will I cleanse you."

2. *Practical pride of power, or unconscious self-dependence in seeking a new*

heart. Examine your thoughts and feelings keenly, and by God's help you will learn that you do actually employ prayer and every other means and striving as so many *efficient forces* to work the needful change. Thus, mark it well, you rob the Holy Ghost of all his part in the work and glory of your salvation. And mark again, God alone, through simple, filial faith, can overcome this formidable obstacle. For without the Spirit, this self-reliance—perfectly natural—is irresistible; nay! perfectly unconscious—is undiscoverable. If you would be saved, therefore, as a lost man, in all your use of means, *teachably* pray—"Create in me a clean heart, O God!" and *trustfully* expect the promise, "A new heart will I give you."

3. *Practical pride of righteousness, or unconscious self-dependence in providing a ground of forgiveness.* Examine carefully the workings of your soul, and, God helping, you will ascertain that whenever you make application to God for pardon, you do always present to his consideration and

rely upon some act of your own—such as sorrow for sin or pledged reformation. Thus, mark it well, you practically pronounce your Maker an ignoramus and the murderer of his Son: for, without a tear or a groan, you propose to accomplish that which he contrived to effect only through the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Observe now, God alone, through simple, filial faith, can set aside this deadly obstacle to human salvation. For so perfectly natural—nay! so utterly unconscious to your fallen heart is this self-dependence for justifying virtue that, without divine aid, you would never renounce or even discover the malady. As a sinful creature, therefore, who by no agency of your own can comply with the demands of heaven's all-perfect law, if you would be saved, study to show God that in your very heart you do honor his Son and his salvation, by gratefully accepting the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ so graciously offered in substitution for your own legal obligation.

As embracing the above, yet deserving separate statement—

4. *Practical pride of independence, or an unconscious habit of going by our own power too stern even to think of dependence upon another.* Here is the fountain-head of all man's embarrassment in returning to God. Every successive hindrance arises from the fact that you, the seeker, make every movement upon your own plan of salvation, and not upon God's. In your plan, you are the agent, and self-deliverance the aim. *You* work regeneration; *you* provide the basis of justification; and *you* settle the rule of judgment. By God's plan he is the agent, and the universal weal the object. The Holy Ghost regenerates; the Son of God justifies; and the word of God constitutes the standard of judgment. Now remember this: it is not enough that you should know that Scripture teaches you dependence, nor that you should acknowledge your dependence, nor that you should *seem to feel* your dependence. You must

act it out before God in your very heart. The necessity is absolute. If you would be saved, you must learn to realize and to act on it—that "without Christ you can do nothing; but through Christ which strengtheneth you, you can do all things. Thus, *trust* in God is *salvation*. Trust—simple, hearty, exclusive.

II. *Study the marks of a deceived soul.*

Trust not an anxious sinner's words or feelings. His heart wofully deceives him. False Conversion. Analyze his inmost soul, and, if unconverted, you will discover the following facts:

1. His repentance proceeds wholly from love of self, not at all from love to God; and consists in sorrow for sin on account of its trouble and peril to himself, not on account of its injustice and dishonor to God. You perceive that this man is a rebel still, for his repentance does not restore God's right to reign over his soul.

2. He feels that God has pardoned his sins in consideration of his own acts of penitence and purposed obedience. Thus, he leaves no room for Christ, and, of a truth, in his deepest soul, makes no use of his vicarious sacrifice. Why say in his deepest soul?

3. He is more intensely gratified by his supposed deliverance from condemnation than distressed by his unsanctified depravities; and the reason is this: he loves himself and not God, and happiness more than holiness.

4. Is he breaking forth in rapturous strains under an assured sense of his divine adoption? If deceived, you will chill him to the core of his heart by this inquiry—"Have you as clear a conviction that, had divine justice dealt with you according to your sins, it would have dismissed you 'with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord'?" The fact is, every grace has its counterfeit, and the more gushing, rapturous, and unrestrained the emotions are,

often the more suspicious. The reason is this: a glorious conversion, if true, always implies such a proportionate enlightenment touching both the depravity and the deceitfulness of the heart as may well abate overconfident assurance of conversion, and check the gushings of tumultuous joy.

5. He complains of hardness of heart, not because it resists God's claims to his contrition, but because it will not comply with his self-contrived plan of reaching God's mercy.

6. He lives by his powers, not by his principles: therefore, when his hope fails, his service of God ceases, for there is nothing left to move him.

7. The distinguishing feature of spurious conversion is this—justice to his Maker is not the sinner's aim; self-deliverance is all he seeks. Therefore, since false affection leads to false dependence, he very naturally mistakes an ordinary accompaniment for an essential element of conversion; often a set

of sudden, brilliant joys, for the assured work of the Spirit. Thus while it verily seems to the sinner as if he tries to turn to God sincerely—"a deceived heart hath turned him aside" fatally.

8. That professor was never converted who mistook *selfish* for *godly* sorrow. Selfish sorrow never parts with sin nor bows to God; godly sorrow does both. That professor never became a Christian whose faith relied for pardon upon certain good feelings and purposes of his own; for a mind actually self-dependent does not feel lost and cannot reach the Saviour, while he who intelligently pleads the righteousness of Christ feels his ruin and accepts the Gospel. That professor who feels that he has experienced all degrees of conviction, comfort, and confidence, after all may be no Christian. The heart is an arch-deceiver. Many a man has passed conversion who thinks he has never reached it; and many more have never reached conversion who will assure you that they have passed it. Clearly it is not the

quantity, nor the confidence, but the *kind* of feeling which constitutes religion; it is not the suddenness, nor the joyousness, but the *holiness* of the affection which decides the character. If the doctrine of "total depravity" be taught in Scripture, then the first particle of holy feeling that enters the soul (joy or no joy) is the *new* heart. Paul's experience settles the fact that this man is regenerated: "I know that in my *flesh* dwelleth *no good* thing."

9. The one great rule to detect self-deception demands that the inquirer should judge himself—not by his knowledge but his character; not by his theoretic instruction but his moral feelings. He should not dispose of searching inquiries by giving such answers as his sabbath-school, pulpit, and Bible-teaching qualify him to render; but he should look deep into his soul to find out what his heart *trusts to*, when he seeks pardon—*on* what *it relies* when it toils for conversion.

III. *Study some of the evidences of genuine conversion.*

Does it proceed from "Self love" at all?

1. The repentance of the true convert proceeds, not from self-love only, but from love to God, and admiration for holiness also; and therefore includes *godly* sorrow for sin, and a purpose, for righteousness sake, to serve God in future.

True Conversion.

2. His hope of pardon is founded upon no acts of his own, such as penitence, prayer, or purposed amendments; but solely upon that work of Christ whereby, in man's stead, he honored the precept of God's law by obedience, and its penalty by death.

3. He feels an implanted thirst for righteousness whereby self-denial, humiliation, cross-bearing, and contrition, refresh his soul. So predominant, indeed, is this hungering after rectitude, that he is more depressed by his unsanctified nature than cheered by his hope of heaven. ?

4. His love of the brethren is not, as it once was, a cold respect, a distant ap-

proval: 'tis rather a warm affection, a close fraternity.

5. He is governed by his principles, not by his emotions. He knows God's claims and his own obligations, and appreciates them. To serve God, therefore, is the deepest purpose of his soul. Consequently, comforted or uncomforted, converted or unconverted, measurably—'tis all one to him. He ever feels God's claims and his own duties, and, to the best of his ability, serve God he must, come what may.

6. After all, the highest evidence of a new heart is this—it feels that "sin is its sorest burden, and sanctity its sweetest luxury; for, by its new taste, holiness is essential beauty, and sin deformity absolute. Therefore it ever seeks the one and eschews the other by a faithful continuance in well-doing.

IV. *Ponder the perils of holy living.*

Holy Life.

In attempting to practice holy principle, to carry out regeneration in conduct —beware of the following temptations:

1. Neglect of closet duty: thereby you obstruct the vital breathing of the soul.

2. Neglect of the word of God: thereby you rob the soul of its daily bread.

3. Neglect of social and public worship: thereby you despise the ordinary *means* of a holy life.

4. Neglect of the Son and the Spirit of God: thereby you reject the necessary *power* of a holy life.

5. Neglect of habitual vigilance: thereby you expose your soul to injurious thoughts. These beget unhallowed feelings, and these unholy life.

6. Any indecision, irregularity, or half-heartedness in Christian duty. The soul is

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more than half conquered, and must soon fall, when it fails to seek first the kingdom.

7. Any growing interest in pleasure, business, or aught else earthly. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and, by the help of worldly indulgence, will soon drive it out of the soul.

8. The resurrection of dominant lusts: former besetments, though mortally wounded, are sure to make a desperate struggle to regain their accustomed dominion.

9. Indiscreet companionship: the sorest curse of the convert—positively, throwing into the soul every hurtful influence; negatively, cutting off the soul from every source of spiritual supply.

Finally, study to beware of the grand delusion of the fall. The truth is this—substance dwells in eternity, shadows in time. All that we see is unreal, and must soon vanish: realities are reached only by faith. Therefore, ever live for the next world, not for this.

V. *How shall the convert maintain a holy life?*

Holy Living.

1. By carrying out that repentance toward God which renounces sin, and that faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ which takes the first step in holy obedience.

2. By cherishing that dependence upon the Spirit of God which empowers the soul to discharge all holy duties; and that reliance upon the Son of God which feeds the heart with all Christian acceptance.

3. By pondering the word of life: whereby the soul sees God and feels his authority; learns his fall from God, and tastes the power and curse of sin; appreciates Christ crucified, and appropriates his purchased blessings; in a word, which welcomes all holy teaching, and is sustained in all holy living.

4. By inviolable regularity in the use of appointed means: thus, we invigorate Christian principle by assuring the soul

that all else should be subservient to our progress in the divine life.

5. By intense spirituality in all worship: thus we imbibe the sanctifying strength of all Christian truth.

6. By ever training the soul to practise the presence of God, and call up the pertinent duty: thus we do all in our power to break the dominion of this world over us.

7. By studying intensely for the space of an hour, at stated periods through life, some great doctrine of our religion: say the attributes or relations of God, the worth of the soul, the excellency of righteousness, the iniquity of sin, the necessary power of a moral act, the vanity of time, the solemnity of eternity. Thus, we cut the root of carnality and spiritualize the soul.

8. Be sure that you begin your Christian life aright—the commencement often shapes the conclusion. Frame the house and you settle every great question, and lay down

the law of all subsequent work. By your early habits, it is quite possible that you are cutting out your life on earth and your destiny in eternity. Oh, then, establish now such a course of living as shall import into your soul large measures of the Spirit, fling out upon the world large powers of holiness, and lay up in eternity large rewards of glory.

9. It will be your duty to confess Christ "before men": but examine yourself thoroughly whether you be indeed in the faith. For if there be an arch-deceiver, and the heart be "deceitful above all things," and the world bears witness to the power of both in the surrounding multitudes, palpably deceived in their first judgment respecting their personal religion, Christian prudence would seem to dictate a reasonable postponement of the duty of public Christian profession, with a view to discreet conduct in the premises.

10. Never forget that Christian life is a warfare. You have enemies without and

within, visible and invisible; enemies numerous, vigilant, artful, powerful, and persistent. Mount, therefore, your watch-tower forthwith; study their arts, approaches, and power; and bear in mind that the one only victorious command is—watch and fight, and trust and pray until the victory is won and the soul is saved.

11. Should you be overtaken by sin, or find yourself declining in religious spirit, principle, or practice, be sure to fly at once to the feet of your Saviour. There abide and wrestle, by studious and protracted confession and supplication, until you feel graciously forgiven and revived.

12. Be sure to keep your end in view. Time is but the land of your sojourning, the field of your toil. Your rest remaineth; eternity is your home. Watch and pray, and ever live for the mansions above.

Finally, never forget that your soul is a *thing devoted.* You are now *consecrated,* consecrated *to God.* You are not your

own: "Body, soul, and spirit, you have been bought with a price." Sacred to God, see to it that you are never again found on this earth a votary of self and the world. And now, by his Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, may the glorious Father keep your heart and mind, unto a blameless life and a blessed immortality.

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